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ABSTRACT

Classroom magazines used in adult literacy classes can focus on particular topics of study, or they can consist of more general articles. Classroom publishers should think about the following elements when they are producing a magazine: (1) students must decide what they want the magazine to be and develop a mission statement; (2) an editorial staff must be set up; (3) the staff should compare possible articles to the magazine's mission statement in order to decide what to include; (4) the material should be copy-edited and checked for accuracy, providing material for lessons on grammar and spelling; (5) a graphics staff should consider student submissions of artwork and photos; (6) a distribution and promotion staff should promote the magazine; and (7) the teacher and staff should enjoy the work and excite the readers. (KC)

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Ohio Literacy Resource Center

*Enhancing adult literacy in the State of Ohio*

# Teacher To Teacher

ED 378 420

## CREATING A CLASSROOM MAGAZINE

Adult literacy educators are always on the lookout for authentic and motivating ideas for writing instruction. In this issue of ***Teacher to Teacher***, we share an adaptation of an article entitled "Creating a Classroom Magazine" by Christine San Jose. The article originally appeared in the July, 1994, issue of Book Links, a bi-monthly magazine published by the American Library Association.

Classroom magazines are adaptable to many adult literacy instructional situations. They could focus on particular topics of study, for example, or issues could consist of more general entries. Magazines could become part of classroom libraries and could be shared with other adult literacy programs or with program funders. Of course, learners will want their own copies for their homes.

A magazine is a treasure box of variety. Its form is so flexible that any class can create a magazine around any number of themes or topics. It can include a variety of writing so that everyone can make a respected contribution.

A teacher who wants a creatively cohesive start to the school year might well launch a magazine, with every student's voice recognized in a publication that can be shared with family and friends. Then throughout the months ahead, the magazine can invite experiments with different kinds of writing, can motivate close attention to detail, can deepen learning across the curriculum (a sports health magazine, for example) and, finally, can commemorate the year together.

Happily, classroom publishing is well established these days. But books or newspapers, rather than magazines, have been the usual choices. Here are seven elements for classroom publishers to think about when they're producing a magazine.

*One:* Have your students decide what they want their magazine as a whole to be. During this decision-making time, classroom publishers might search the mastheads of other magazines to find their mission statements. If one isn't stated, students might study the contents and write or deduce one for that magazine, which will give them a clear idea of the magazine's goals. They might also query magazines for their mission statements, which would, incidently, introduce letter-writing skills. Students should also consider what they are able to do best and what their

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potential audience might want. Above all, students who are going to pour their talents and industry into their magazines need, as professional magazine staffs do, a clear, committed goal that engages both head and heart.

*Two:* Set up an editorial staff. Here, too, an examination of the mastheads of magazines will help classroom publishers to see the kind of breakdown in staff they might need; then, adapt it to your situation.

*Three:* In planning what is to be included in an issue, the editorial staff should constantly ask, "Does this meet our magazine's goal?" and build in plenty of time for discussion. This is especially true when judging stories, as personal taste will undoubtedly foster disagreements. Remind students that the give-and-take of working together will result in a deeper perception of the material, their goal, and themselves.

Informational features pose their own challenges. Students should ask: What is the best way to present this information? Should it be presented as a factual piece, a narrative, an interview, a quiz? In reading submissions they should look for depth of subject, for personal bias, and for appeal. This kind of classroom discussion will nurture thoughtful writers *and* readers.

*Four:* The material should be fact-checked and copy-edited for grammar and spelling errors. This offers authentic reasons to teach grammar and other writing skills.

*Five:* A graphics staff should consider art submissions for each issue. Student drawings, photos, charts and designs should be included and placed.

*Six:* A distribution and promotion staff should look at ways to tell others about the magazine and think about how to distribute the product.

*Seven:* Enjoy your work! Readers will sense your curiosity, excitement, wonder, and discovery of putting out a magazine.

P.S. Be sure to give your publication a great name!

--By Christine San Jose, Book Links, July 1994, p. 53

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